



R.C. SHERRIFF's Classic First World War Drama

# JOURNEY'S END

RESOURCE PACK

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# JOURNEY'S END



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# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES

## THE WESTERN FRONT

The play takes place during the First World War. It is set in an officers' dugout in the trenches on the Western Front. This was the battle line between the Allies and Germans that lay across Northern France, Belgium and down to the Swiss Border.

For much of the war this front remained fairly static with neither side giving nor taking much territory; indeed advances were measured in just a few miles gained over half a year or more.

## THE TRENCHES

The Trenches of the Western Front stretched in a continuous line from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier. These were not two distinct parallel lines on a map but a rabbit warren of fire, communication and supply trenches.

Getting lost in the trenches was a real possibility. Any advances in territory for both sides were minor. The technique of advancing over a trench wall and running directly into your enemy's line of fire across the barbed wire, decaying bodies and mud of 'no-man's land' was costly to human life. Casualties were high.

At the end of the four year conflict 908,371 British men had been killed and 2 million injured. Germany lost 1,773,700 men and over 4 million were injured.

## FRONT LINE TRENCHES

These were zigzag shaped to stop the enemy being able to shoot at soldiers from one end of the trench. The trench was protected by barbed wire at the front and sandbags placed along the top. Trenches were approximately 7 feet deep and 6 feet wide and a fire-step was cut into the trench to enable the soldiers to see over the top. When the soldiers in the play are told to 'stand-to' they must climb onto the fire-step in preparation for shooting at the enemy.

'No-man's land' was the land between the German and Allied frontline trenches. The distance to the enemy frontline across 'no-man's land' could be just a few feet. Behind the frontline trenches were the support trenches and joining these were the communications trenches; this enabled the wounded to be carried away and men and supplies to go to the front line.

## ST QUENTIN

The play opens just before the advance at St Quentin. St Quentin lies 45 miles west of Amiens and 90 miles north of Paris. By 1918 German forces out-numbered the Allies on the Western Front and in the spring of that year Germany staged three offensives.

The advance at St. Quentin, a city in the Somme River Valley, in March 1918 pushed British troops into a 30 mile retreat. Over the next four months the Germans progressed east towards Paris shelling the city with their enormous guns known as Big Berthas. These had a firing range of 75 miles. With American help the Allies managed to contain the German advance. The turning point was the Second Battle of the Marne fought from July 15th to August 6th, 1918.

By early September 1918, the Allies had regained the territory they had lost that spring and by the end of the month Germany realised it could no longer overcome the strength of the combined Allied forces. The Germans surrendered in November 1918.

## EQUIPMENT

British soldiers on the Western Front would carry in total 30 kilos of equipment. This would include: a steel helmet, a rifle, two grenades, 220 rounds of ammunition, wire cutters, field dressing, entrenching tools, great-coat, two sandbags, rolled ground sheet, water bottle, haversack, mess tin, towel, shaving kit, extra socks, message book and rations.

## ALCOHOL IN THE TRENCHES

Rum was the alcohol that was given to soldiers. Each division (20,000) was allowed 300 gallons which was usually distributed after an offensive and in very cold weather.

# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES



# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES

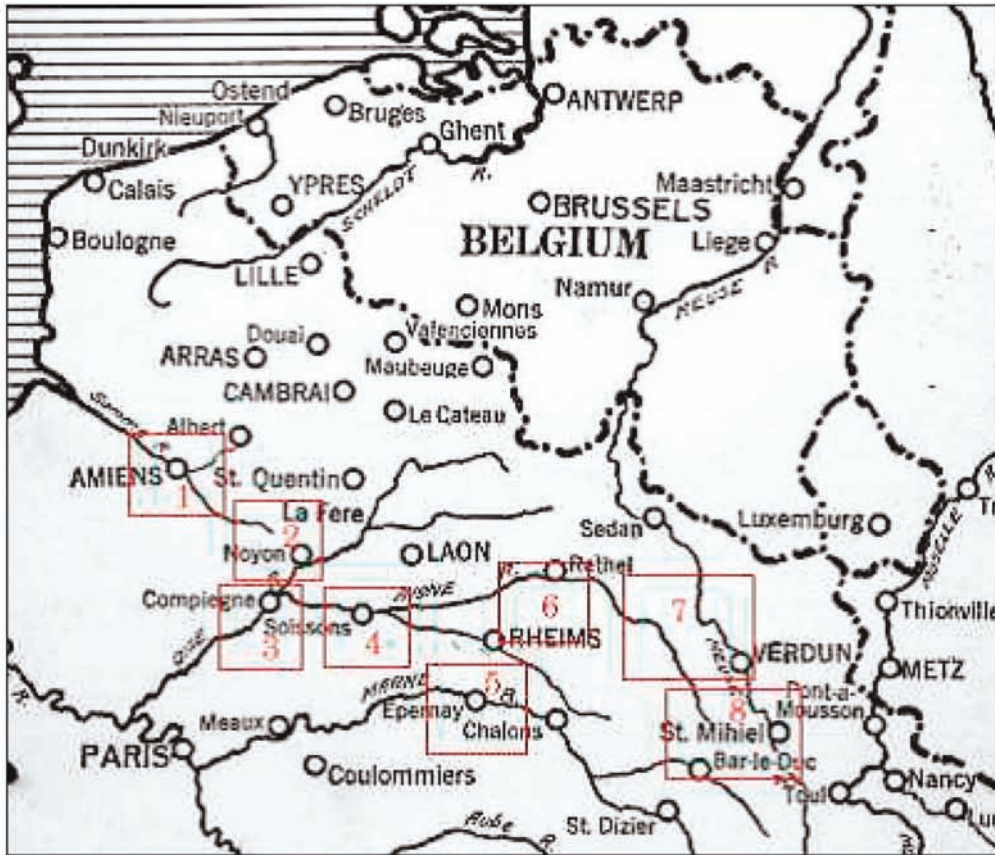


## DISCUSSION

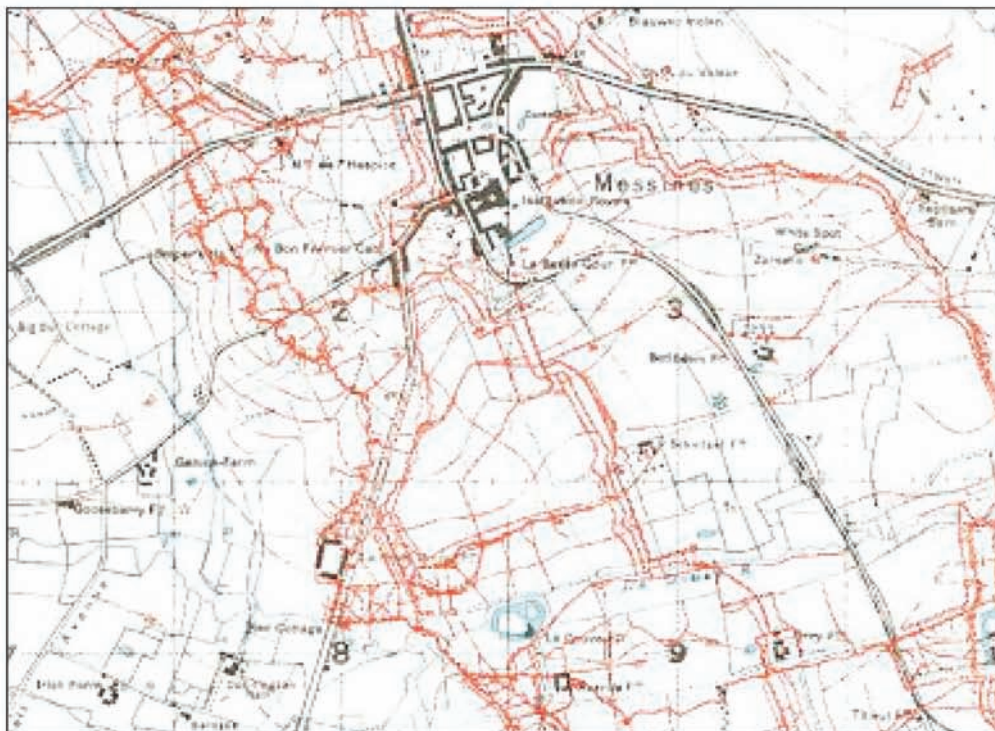
In Act One Raleigh refers to Lancer's Alley 'twisting and turning for miles over a sort of plain'.

- Can you find other sections of the text where there are descriptions of the trenches?
- Can you find sections of the text where they refer to the specifics of trench warfare - what do we learn from the play about the mechanics of this?
- Is the text critical of trench warfare?

# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES

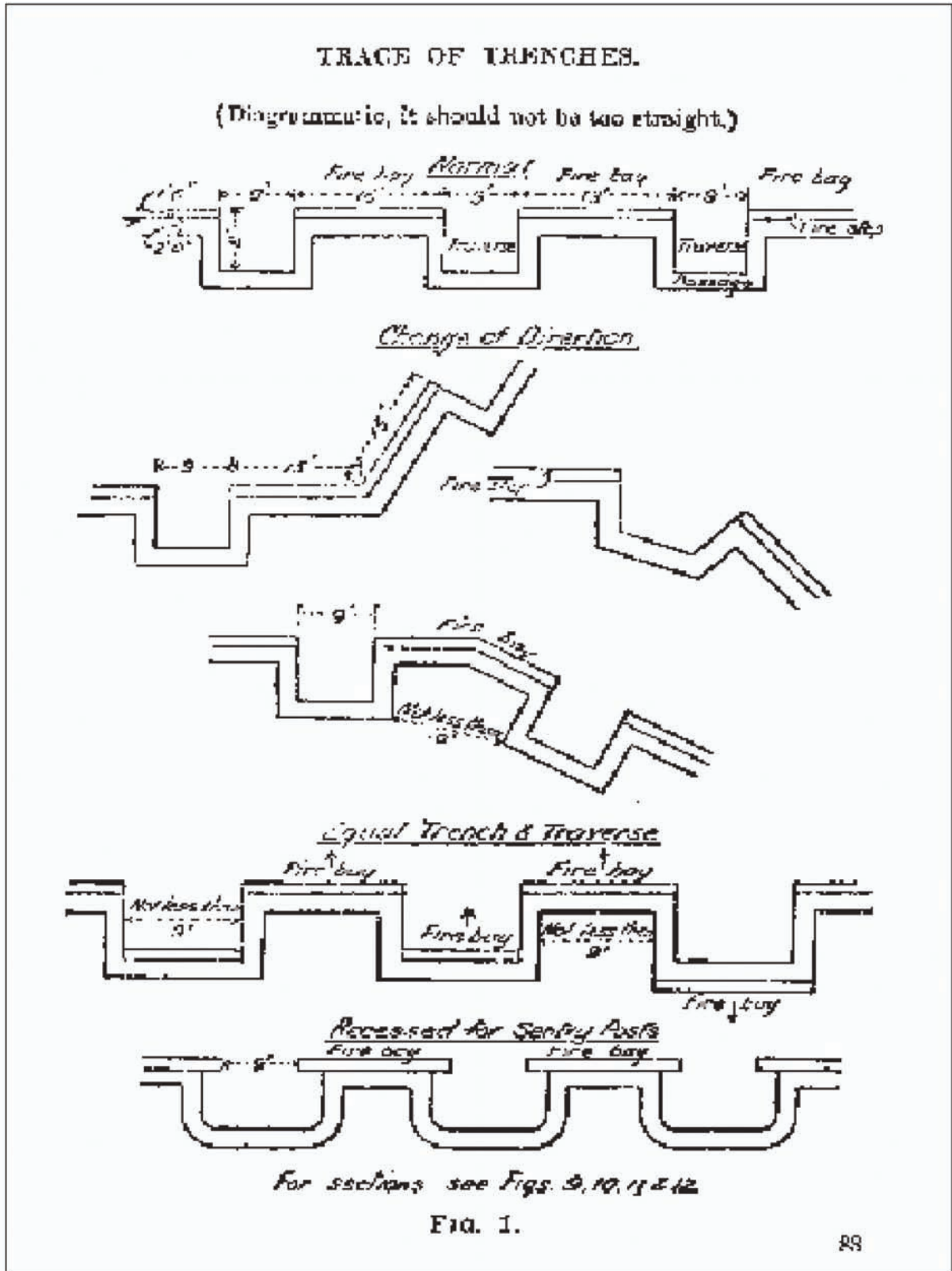


The Western Front showing the position of St Quentin.



A Trench Map (Messines) showing the complex system of trenches.

# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES



Diagrams of Trench Construction from 1914 Government Manual on Trench Warfare.

# THE WAR IN THE TRENCHES

## ACTIVITIES

### Soundscape

**1. Divide the class into two groups.**

Each group is going to brainstorm the sounds you would hear in the trenches on a daily basis, (keep gunfire to a minimum). Start with early morning sounds and go through the day to the evening. Think of the details of the individual sounds rather than the general cacophony. Try out the sounds, experiment. Choose the best ones.

**2. One student is the volume control**

- when her/his hand is on the floor the class is completely silent – as they raise their hand the volume increases. The volume control person is also responsible for starting and stopping the Soundscape.

**3. Students then go through the play text and find individual words and phrases that bring to life the experience of living in the trenches.**

Experiment with ways of saying these words – individually, in groups, whispering, shouting, repetition.

**4. Add these words to your Soundscape**

until you have a collage of sounds and words that create the atmosphere of the trenches.

**5. Each group performs their Soundscape in turn**

– the other group has to identify as many of the sounds as they can.

### Creative Writing Exercise

**Write a letter home from one of the characters in the play – choose a key moment of the play such as:**

- A letter from Hibbert to his parents after the stand off with Stanhope. (Act II scene (ii))
- A letter from Osborne to his wife before he goes on the raid. (Act III)
- A letter from Raleigh to his sister after the raid where Osborne dies. (Act III)

# THE AUTHOR

## R.C. SHERRIFF

**R.C. Sherriff was born in 1896 in Kingston upon Thames. He wanted to be a public school games' master but to go to university would have been too expensive and he didn't think he was bright enough for a scholarship. After school he followed in his father's footsteps and joined an insurance company. In 1916 at the age of 19 he joined the East Surrey Regiment and was sent to the Somme. Here he kept a war diary.**

He fought at Passchendaele in 1917 where they were given maps of locations up to 20 miles the other side of enemy lines but succeeded in advancing just 600 metres. Wounded by 52 pieces of flying concrete from a pillbox he was sent home injured.

After the war, Sherriff returned to work as a clerk for Sun Insurance where he stayed for ten years. Sherriff's real passion was rowing. To raise funds for Kingston Rowing Club he started to write plays for amateur productions. Sherriff decided to try his luck and sent the script for *Journey's End* to West End producers. The Stage Society agreed by one vote to give it a one night showing in its Sunday evening slot. The cast included a young Laurence Olivier as Stanhope.

When producer Maurice Browne saw the play, he was determined to bring it to the West End and raised the necessary funds to mount a production. *Journey's End* was an enormous success and by the end of 1929 there were thirty one productions of the play around the world (including a translation in Germany where it was renamed *The Other Side*).

Sherriff was soon earning over £1,000 a week from royalties and with his new found wealth enrolled at Oxford University. When asked by HG Wells to write the screenplay for *The Invisible Man* he dropped out of Oxford to work in Hollywood.

He never looked back and his many screen successes include *Goodbye Mr Chips* and *The Dam Busters*. Sherriff died in 1975.

### DISCUSSION: HEROISM

One of the starting points for the play was Sherriff's interest in writing a piece that involved a young man hero-worshipping an older man.

- Who are the two characters that personify this is the play?
- Do you think the older man is heroic?
- Can you find any examples of heroic behaviour in the play?

# THE AUTHOR

## ACTIVITIES:

### Sherriff's War Diary

**Sherriff wrote a war diary whilst he was in France. This section was written between the end of October 1916 and Christmas 1916. Read the two extracts below.**

- Which character does this remind you of?
- Can you find passages of *Journey's End* that echo the experience that Sherriff has captured here?

### Extract one:

'Those French shops ain't no good at all', he said, 'they don't seem to have no henterprise. The first one I goes into has nothink but tinned apricots and lime juice; the next ain't got no lime-juice nor hapricots of any description but just stuffed full of tinned asparagus. You 'as to go into a dozen of 'em to get anythink like an assortment.'

### Extract two:

**'Why here'** - he pointed down on the floor. I had never seen such a mess. Everything I had left on the table when I went to bed the night before and everything I had left out on the shelves was now strewn on the floor in hopeless confusion - bread, chocolate, soup powders, soap, candles.

#### **He went on in a kind of soliloquy:**

'They started with soup - but found it a bit dry then they just ad a bit o' chocolate which they've just nipped off round the edges; then just a bite o' candle; then they had some hointment from this 'ere toob' He picked up a tube of boracic ointment, which had been pulled out of my pocket first aid case. 'Then they ain't satisfied neether 'cos they ends up wiv a bit o'sweet smellin' soap and they ain't finished non of it, neether, just a sneck at each kind of.'

#### **He went on clearing up in silence and as he finished he**

**said:** 'soup powder- urgh! An' they never knowed it wanted a drop o'water wiv it!' I said 'surely rats couldn't do all this?' It was uncanny to think of rats doing such damage. I had slept through everything too. 'Oh it's rats all right, sir' he said with great deliberation, 'it's rats alright; why, they nearly pinched my boots the other night when I was asleep- and they've gnawed a hole in Robinson's pack that you could put your fist in'. He shook his head sadly - 'They know a bit round 'ere - these rats do.'

# STAGING

## INTERVIEWS WITH DESIGNER JONATHAN FENSOM AND DIRECTOR DAVID GRINDLEY.

### Question:

The play is set in an officers' dugout. Your design is striking in that it uses less than half the height of the proscenium arch. Why did you choose such a design?

### Jonathan:

*From the early days we wanted to convey the reality of war not romanticise it. We felt it was important to give the audience a sense of what it was really like in the trenches, to pull away from any poetic interpretation because so few of us now have any real sense of what it was really like. We wanted to take away the fourth wall of a trench for the audience to look into. We felt that here was a play that was about sitting around a table and we wanted to draw the audience in. The lighting design helped this illusion, it was lit to look as though the only light was from the few lamps inside the dugout. This set looks small and the effect is claustrophobic but it is on a far larger scale than a real dugout.*

### Question:

Another striking feature is the realism of the set and props, you even have real mud and water on the floor. Why did you choose to create the set in such detail?

### Jonathan:

*A visit to the trenches in northern France greatly influenced the design of the play. We went to Vimy Ridge because there was lots of tunneling activity there. Lots of this has now been sanitised – made safe with concrete walls and lit with electric light. However, our guide took us into tunnels that are not open to the public and turned all the electricity off. Some were no more than 4 feet tall, it was dark, muddy, wet and very hard to get through. The dugouts were no more than holes in the ground, we wanted to give the sense of how incredibly uncomfortable and badly put together they were.*

*We used latex lining on the floor and covered this with gravel and sand. This helped the actors to feel bogged down. It was also very slippery so the way they had to walk was informed by that. The actors are sprayed with water before they go on stage, so their trousers are damp, water also drips through the ceiling of the trench.*

*We got two experts in to advise us on the costumes – Taff Gillingham and Richard Ingram, who had been involved in the BBC's reality show, *The Trenches*. They sourced the costumes and recreated them exactly as they would have been.*

*They also explained to the actors why they would be wearing certain parts of their costume. Mason, for example, wore two brass rods on his left sleeve to show that he had been wounded twice; the Colonel wore a coat that could have been from Saville Row rather than any military dress. It was the little details of the costumes and set that gave it life... not being able to put stuff on the floor because it was wet, the routine of hanging up equipment – this affected how the actors played the scenes.*

# STAGING

## INTERVIEWS WITH DESIGNER JONATHAN FENSOM AND DIRECTOR DAVID GRINDLEY.

### Question:

**Why did you choose to frame the play with these large backdrops – the Royal family at the start and the memorial wall at the end?**

### David:

*The opening of the play was originally going to be a rolling English landscape under a blue sky, creating the romantic idyll of an England that believed it was the best country in the world with Raleigh strolling into view singing Jerusalem. But the set wasn't possible so we revised this idea to have a curtain in front of the trench with the Royal family painted on it in all their pomp and ceremony. The idea remained the same. The image represents British self-confidence and the traditional order of things that was going to be completely overturned by the War. During the previews, we cut Raleigh singing Jerusalem. The image did not need any assistance to work.*

*I also wanted to tie the show to the original production. The producer of the original show, Maurice Browne, didn't want the actors to bow at the end - they just stood and looked at the audience. Originally we had the idea to drop a black cloth in front of the dugout and have the actors standing at the end in a dark void, just their heads and torsos lit in the nothingness – the ghosts of the past looking down on us. But a visit to the Menin Gate in Ypres on a research field-trip with Jonathan was very evocative for us. The Menin Gate contains the names of 54,896 men who died in the Ypres area and have no known graves. Every night the last post is played at 8pm for one name on that monument and has been played every night since the monument was built, with the exception of two years during World War 2 when the Germans occupied France. It will take to nearly 2040 for the Last Post to have been played for every man listed on the monument. After this trip we decided to create a section of a memorial wall on the backcloth and have the men stand in front of that whilst the Last Post is played.*

### Jonathan:

*When David and I went to the Menin Gate and looked at the memorials it was the numbers we couldn't get over. In the play there are just 5 characters, 5 amongst the millions that were killed. The names on the backcloth at the end of the play are the same size as those on the Menin Gate. Under the East Surrey Division we have put the names of the characters from the play... tiny names in a sea of names...*

# STAGING

## REALISM

In the late 19th century a new type of theatre developed where people talked in normal language and dealt with 'ordinary' situations and the performers didn't 'act' but 'behaved' like their audience. In London this became known as 'Cup and Saucer' drama and was part of a larger movement of realism that developed across the arts in the 19th century.

Realism in the arts is the accurate, detailed and unembellished depiction of real life. In late 19th century theatre designers constructed rooms which they dressed with the care of any interior decorator, with sofas, curtains, chairs and carpets on their stage floors. Instead of painted flats they had real doors with real door handles and the actors wore well-made fashionable dress not the trappings of a dusty theatre wardrobe. Attention to detail was also evident in the stage business – actors made tea and in one play even made a roly-poly pudding. The plays dealt seriously and sensitively with issues of the day and were about real people in real situations.

### DISCUSSION:

**The designer for *Journey's End* worked very hard to make the trench on stage seem real to the audience.**

- Did you feel that the set successfully drew you into the play? How?
- How did the realism of the set help you to get a feel for what life must have been like in the trenches?
- Do you think that the creation of a memorial wall at the end of the play was a good addition to the script? How did you feel when you saw the soldiers standing in front of this wall at the end of the play?

# STAGING

## STAGING ACTIVITIES

### A

Everyone runs around the room and touches an object and calls out its name.

They are then asked to think back to the play. Repeat the exercise but this time they are asked to touch an object in the room but instead of calling out its name they call out the name of an object they remember from the trenches *Journey's End*.

In a group discuss what details from the set they can remember most clearly. Was the set effective in creating a sense of what it must have been like to live in a dugout?

### B

Students close their eyes and imagine they are in a dugout. They think of three things they can hear. Then three things they can see, smell, taste and touch.

Students are then asked to open their eyes and write all the things they have just thought of down on a different piece of paper – they will need a total of 15 pieces of paper each.

The teacher collects all the pieces of paper together and makes a 'sense-carpet' by laying all the words on the floor.

In groups students walk around the carpet and collect the words that they think are the most evocative of the dug-out (up to 20 each).

Using the words/phrases they have chosen from the carpet they work individually to create a short piece of writing entitled 'My life is.....' about a soldier's daily routine in the dugout.

### DISCUSS:

- Is it possible to recreate the play without using such a realistic and detailed set?

## ACTIVITY

Comparison between the sets for the 2010 production and the first West End production of 1929.

On the next two pages are photographs from the original West End production of the play. One of the actors in the original production wore Sherriff's personal uniform. When Jonathan Fensom showed these photos to the costume and props advisors they noticed inaccuracies in the period details – some of the officers were wearing inaccurate dress.

- Having seen the contemporary version of the play can you identify any differences in the design between the two productions?

# STAGING



An original photograph of the first West End production of *Journey's End* in January 1929.

Image One:

The Dugout. From Left to right: Trotter (Melville Cooper); Mason (Alexander Field); Osborne (George Zucco); and Raleigh (Maurice Evans)

# STAGING



An original photograph of the first West End production of *Journey's End* in January 1929.

Image Two:

A wounded Raleigh (Mr M.Evans) is carried into the dugout by the company sergeant (Mr R.Smith). Stanhope (Mr C.Clive) tells him to put Raleigh on his bed.

# CLASS

## INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR DAVID GRINDLEY

### Question:

**The class system stands out very strongly in the play – do you think this is one of the main themes of the play and what do you think Sherriff is trying to say about the class system?**

### David:

*The play is saying that the class system is undergoing change. I didn't want Trotter, the aspiring middle class character, to come across as a fool – yes he eats a lot, this is displacement activity. Trotter is tough and when he's called to serve he's up there like a shot and they all appreciate that. The traditional officer class was being wiped out, so non-commissioned officers were being promoted up and found themselves in an elevated position. They discovered they could operate as well as the upper class officers – just as women were stepping into traditional men's roles on the homefront. The war was very instrumental in emancipation, freeing-up the class system – people could succeed by merit not birth.*

### DISCUSSION:



**Can you find a scene or part of a scene in the play where:**

- you think that the class system is very evident?
- the characters observe that the war has brought changes to the class system?
- Sherriff uses language to denote different classes in the play - can you find examples of how the characters show their class through their use of language?



# CLASS

## ACTIVITIES

### Status exercises

#### Warm Up

- Take a pack of cards. Each student takes a card and without looking at it places the card on their forehead. The aim of the game is to guess the value of their card - Aces are low and Kings are high.
- The group walk around the room and must say hello to everyone they meet. The way they say hello will indicate to the person they are talking to the value of their card (for example if the person they are saying hello to is a King or Queen they will be very deferential, if the person they are saying hello to is an Ace they will dismiss them.)
- After a few minutes the group is asked to get into a line with the aces at one end and kings at the other. They must guess their place in the line.
- When everyone is in line they look at their card and see how accurate they were in guessing their status.
- How can we show status physically? How does someone who is high status hold themselves compared to some one who is low status? Experiment with high and low status movements.

#### Status Game

- Write the names of the main characters in the play on a separate card. Each student gets a card.
- Each student chooses one line that the character speaks in the play that they think is important to that character. They write it on the back of the card then memorize the line.
- The class are split into watchers and players .
- The players must walk into the centre of the room, look from side to side then present their line to the watchers in such a way as to show their status. They do not tell the watchers who they are, they must just say their line.

- When all the players have spoken the watchers must place them in order of status.
- When the status line is complete the class discusses what criteria they used for status. Was it class? Was it army rank?
- What different criteria are there for status in the play? Would the characters be in a different order if you put them into a line according to army rank? Is there a disparity between a character's status in the army rank and their class? Could you put them in another type of status line? Heroism for example?
- Repeat the exercise with the watchers and players swapping places and choosing a different type of status.

#### Hot Seating

There are clear moments in the play when men assert their rank over the other men.

- When the officers reprimand Mason about the pepper.
- When Stanhope prevents Hibbert from going sick.
- When Osborne and Raleigh are chosen by the Colonel to do the raid.

You are going to 'Hot-Seat' these characters. The aim of the exercise is for the class to find out more about how the character feels about his situation at that moment in the play.

- In the middle of the circle put a single chair.
- Choose one of the key moments listed above.
- A volunteer chooses to be either Mason, Hibbert or Osborne and sits on the chair. The others will hot-seat the character, that is they will ask the character questions and the person must answer the questions in role.

# IS THIS AN ANTI-WAR PLAY?

## THE RISE OF AN ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN.

The overwhelming majority of people in Britain gave their unquestioning support to the First World War. There was no real voice of dissent and those few who opposed the war were scorned as cowards. There were, of course, protests and debates, but the vast majority of people fought in the First World War, or supported it on the 'Home-front', because they believed that victory for their own country was worth the cost.

The British Government was very careful to prevent journalists from seeing the realities of life on the front and during the conflict newspapers reinforced the Government's propaganda campaign carrying scare stories about the inhumanity of the enemy. One famous story about the Kaiser suggested he had ordered that the dead bodies of German soldiers be boiled down to make soap. It was only when the soldiers came home after the war that a real sense of just how horrific the war had been became common knowledge. The returning heroes were met with immense patriotism but there were no jobs and the rising number of unemployed men quickly became disillusioned.

In 1926 there was a great anti-war rally at the Royal Albert Hall. The independent Labour party published a pamphlet on 'How to End War' and in the next ten years a growing number of peace organizations were set up. These included the Youth Anti-War Council, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the National Council for the Prevention of War, the British Youth Peace Assembly, the League to Abolish War, the No More War Movement and the National Peace Council.

## THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

One remarkable story about the First World War is the Christmas Truce of 1914. On Christmas morning an unofficial truce broke out between the German soldiers and the British troops in the trenches. Troops from both sides came out of the trenches and shook hands on the frozen 'no man's land'. They played a friendly football match and visited the German trenches where the soldiers exchanged gifts including plum pudding for German sausages.

On Christmas Eve their comrades had been shot to pieces before their very eyes by the same soldiers who were now exchanging cake and chocolate. The soldiers knew that on Boxing Day the battle would commence again but this one day, Christmas Day 1914, was a remarkable and spontaneous day of peace and friendship between the opposing sides.

# IS THIS AN ANTI-WAR PLAY?

## 1. DIRECTOR DAVID GRINDLEY

'No I don't think it's an anti-war play. There is no 'crie de coeur' against the war. It recognises that the war had to be fought – even Hibbert, who is scared and wants to leave, doesn't question the war. What it highlights is the toll that the war has on those involved in it. This was the last war in history where you could see the whites of the eyes of your enemy because they were physically so close. These men were on the front line for only six days at a time but that was the most frightening time of their whole lives. Trying to contain their fear was intolerable and there was the constant awareness of the enemy being just over the garden fence.'

## 2. MICHAEL BILLINGTON, THE GUARDIAN 2004

'This is not an overtly anti-war play; but everything about Grindley's production from the peacetime dreams of Paul Bradley's working class lieutenant to the final ghostly image of the entire company standing before the cenotaph leaves one feeling overwhelmed by the wasteful horror of war.'

## 3. EVENING POST 1929

*Journey's End* has been called the play that should end war. This may seem like an impossible task which it undoubtedly is, but nevertheless the fact remains that having seen it, few people will leave the theatre with any other conception of modern warfare than futility. Mr Sheriff has already been mentioned for the Nobel Peace Award for his remarkable drama which many think as being among the finest literature that the war has produced.'

## 4. MAURICE BROWNE, THE PRODUCER OF THE ORIGINAL WEST END PRODUCTION IN 1929:

'From the beginning of history the Superior person has proclaimed that the man in the street – His inferior – cannot be trusted to think or act for himself, that public taste is vile and that he the superior person is alone fitted to dictate laws on ethics, aesthetics and the public good... Fifteen years ago for five years the Superior person killed your son and your brother, your lover and your husband, your father and your friend. Today he says loudly 'Oh the public wants to forget the war. Give them tripe!' But the man in the street whose mouthpiece and champion Sheriff has greatly become says quietly and enduringly and to himself and as in the words of the ritual: 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember.'  
We will remember.

## 5. JOURNEY'S END ACT 2 SCENE 2

Stanhope (talking to Hibbert)

...Take the chance old chap and stand in with Osborne, Trotter and Raleigh. Don't you think it's worth standing in with men like that? – when you know they all feel like you do – in their hearts – and just go on sticking it because they know it's – it's the only thing a decent man can do.

### DISCUSSION:

- How does the play make you feel about war in general and specifically the First World War?
- Read the five cuttings. On balance do you think this is an anti-war play?
- Can you find evidence in the text to support your view?

# IS THIS AN ANTI-WAR PLAY?

## ACTIVITY

Consider the following famous quotations about war. Can you relate any of these to how Sheriff portrays the First World War in *Journey's End*?

*'Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth.'*

Albert Einstein

*'War means blind obedience, unthinking stupidity, brutish callousness, wanton destruction, and irresponsible murder.'*

Alexander Berkman

*'Hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity.'*

Dwight D. Eisenhower

# IS THIS AN ANTI-WAR PLAY?

## FEAR

### Interview with director

#### David Grindley

#### Question:

**Few people today have had to face their own mortality – the characters in *Journey's End* grapple with this issue on a daily basis. This underlying fear pervades what is often a very mundane daily routine and shoots to the surface at times throughout the play. The relentless fear was played very effectively by the cast – how did you help the actors to portray this so effectively?**

#### David:

*What I said to the cast was don't play fear, play how vigorously each of you is trying to escape the reality of the dugout. Each character is desperate to occupy his mind with things other than the war. I believe the men's fear is highlighted by how vigorously they engage in their displacement activity.*

*Firstly we decided that each of the characters had at least one displacement activity. For example, Stanhope drinks and works, Osborne listens, Trotter eats and Mason composes menus: 1001 things to do with *Bully Beef*. Only Hibbert is unable to take his mind off his fear and proves incapable of containing it. So when we were rehearsing each actor had in their mind their displacement activity when they were in scenes. So whenever the actor playing Stanhope could he would vigorously work, writing in his notebook duty rotations, etc, whenever Osborne could he would listen to his colleagues intently, whenever Trotter could he would be eating or thinking of when he would next be able to eat, whenever Mason could he would be thinking how he could make the lives of his officers more palatable. Hibbert has nothing to divert himself and so drives himself mad with fear.*

*The second thing that proved useful was that in order to keep everything active, we decided that at no point does anybody reflect on experience instead they relive it. This is most easily identified in Osborne's monologue when he recounts a story of a wounded man being retrieved from No-man's Land. We decided that Osborne was recounting his own experience and when he's telling the story he's reliving it, seeing each moment of it as he's saying it. I felt that by having clear, image by image, pictures of the experience in his own mind, the actor would more successfully plant them in ours.*

## ACTIVITY

### In pairs

- Think of a particularly vivid memory – good or bad.
- Quickly describe the memory to your partner.
- Now shut your eyes and think about your memory again. This time focus on specific details within the story, image by image – colours, sounds, smells, visual details. Open your eyes.
- Tell your friend the story again but this time really focus on describing details of the images you see in your head as if you are re-living the event. Think about the words you are using as you say them.
- Have you managed to make the story more evocative for your listener?
- When you were watching the play were you drawn into the characters' stories? Were the actors successful at planting images in your head?

## DISCUSSION:

In the play can you remember moments where the characters are dealing with fear? For example Hibbert's stand off with Stanhope (Act ii scene(ii)) or Osborne and Raleigh waiting to go on the raid (Act III).

- Were there times when you saw them show this fear physically?
- Can you find places in the text where they expressed their fear verbally?
- Did you believe their fear? Why?
- Is it possible to recreate the play without using such a realistic and detailed set?

#### David Grindley continues:

*There are occasional moments where the characters cannot help themselves and their anxiety breaks through to the surface. Osborne when he's told he's doing the raid has a smoke and his fingers shake. This attention to detail makes it real. In a play like this, which is so intimate, any big gestures would fail; you need to let the audience's imagination work for them.*

# WHY STAGE THIS PLAY TODAY?

## INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR DAVID GRINDLEY

### Question:

**Why stage this play today?**

### David:

*There's no point reviving a play, no matter how old it is, unless it can still resonate with an audience. **Journey's End** is about men in extreme circumstances, men in conflict and how they deal with that situation – this can be applied equally to WW1 in 1918 or Afghanistan in 2011. The men in **Journey's End** come across as real and true and the audience can empathise with the characters on the stage - despite the linguistic anachronisms, the play feels like it was written yesterday. As Britain has been involved in high profile military conflicts since 2001, first in Afghanistan then in Iraq, the public are very aware of how many lives those interventions have cost. But **Journey's End** makes an audience witness the psychological toll the frontline takes on soldiers, showing how they protect themselves and each other from its consequences as best they can.*

*The play is also important historically. Prior to the First World War Britain was a hugely self confident nation but our experience of WW1 had an enormous effect on national self confidence. This human catastrophe led the British public to doubt their leaders and doubt themselves.*

### DISCUSSION:

- Do you agree with the director that this is a play worth reviving?
- What do you think are the important issues in this play?
- How is this play relevant to your lives today?

# WHY STAGE THIS PLAY TODAY?

## ACTIVITIES

### Tableaux warm up A

- Students walk around the room and try to use as much space as possible and keep the same distance from each other.
- Teacher calls 'freeze' and they must stop moving and remain completely still.
- Teacher calls 'walk' and they start moving.
- After a few goes teacher asks the students to stop spontaneously as a group – when one stops they all must stop without teacher prompting.
- They must only start to move again when everyone in the group starts moving together.
- If they concentrate very hard they will be able to start and stop together as a whole group.

### Tableaux warm up B

- Students walk around the room using the whole space.
- When the teacher calls out a number they get into a group of that number as quickly as possible without talking to anyone.
- Teacher will then call out an object such as a car. Each group then has 10 seconds to create the shape of that object without talking.
- When the teacher calls 'freeze' they must freeze in that shape.
- Creating tableaux of key moments in the play
- In small groups students think of 2 or 3 key moments in the play that resonate for them - important moments that reflect why the students think the play should be staged today.
- They are asked to show those moments in a series of 3 frozen tableaux.
- Share these tableaux with other groups.
- Has each group chosen the same key moment? What do these key moments tell us about the play? Discuss your choices.

# WHY STAGE THIS PLAY TODAY?

## IS GOING TO WAR EVER JUSTIFIED?

Children in schools in the First World War would never have questioned the morality of the war. Why do you think this was so? Today you are encouraged to look at both sides of the argument and to make up your own mind.

## ACTIVITY

- Divide the students into groups.
- Each group is going to choose three conditions in which they think it is morally justified to go to war.
- When they have completed their lists one person in each group presents their list to the others in the class.
- Are there conditions that are common to every group?
- Students vote on the seven most important conditions.

## JUST WAR THEORY

Just War Theory has a basis in Roman philosophy and Catholic doctrine. It says that for a war to be just it has to satisfy all the principles of *Jus ad bellum* and *Jus in bello*. These are summarised as:

### 1. *Jus ad bellum* (which defines whether a nation should go to war) has six key principles:

**JUST CAUSE.** The war must be fought to right a wrong, to stop an injustice. This could be relating to restoration of property, or seeking to punish people who have done wrong.

**RIGHT AUTHORITY.** Wars can only be permitted if they have been given the right authority. In the modern world it is generally regarded that right authority sits with the United Nations Security Council – though UN charter (chapter VII, article 51) preserves a nation's right to act in self-defence if they are attacked. Sometimes NATO or other allied groups have used force, for instance in the Balkans or Iraq, without recourse to the United Nations Security Council.

**RIGHT INTENTION.** Wars must be fought to right a wrong or prevent injustice. They should not be about material gain, economic exploitation or political dominance.

**COMPARATIVE JUSTICE.** The likelihood of death and destruction by not doing anything must outweigh the risks of using force before conflict should proceed.

**CHANCE OF SUCCESS.** Wars should only be entered into if there is a chance that there will be a successful end. Futile wars or continuing to fight an unwinnable conflict will result in needless death.

**LAST RESORT.** Use of deadly force must only be considered as a last resort, after all other peaceful and diplomatic means have been exhausted.

### 2. *Jus in bello* (which relates to the conduct of a war or conflict once it has begun) has three principles:

**DISCRIMINATION.** The conflict must be directed to the wrong-doer, and not civilians. Some people argue that this prohibits targeting bombs at civilian areas, terrorism, or the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction.

**PROPORTIONALITY.** The use of force must be proportional to the wrong endured. If one thinks of the Falklands conflict, it would have been out of proportion for the UK to bomb Buenos Aires or launch a ground invasion of mainland Argentina.

**MINIMUM FORCE.** The minimum amount of force to achieve the goal should be used. This is to limit unnecessary death, injury or damage to infrastructure  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=1871>

- How do the six principles you chose as a class compare with the Just War principles of *Jus ad Bellum* and *Jus in Bello*. Are there any of your principles that you felt were important that are not included here?
- Do you think that the First World War was a Just War?

# WHY STAGE THIS PLAY TODAY?

## ACTIVITY

### CIRCLE DEBATE

The Motion: Going to war can never be justified.

- Split the class into two groups. One group is going to argue that war can be justified in certain circumstances, the other group are going to argue that going to war can never be justified.
- To prepare for the debate ask students to google some of the websites listed at the end of this document.
- Each group needs to brainstorm as many arguments as they can either for or against going to war.
- When they have created a list of arguments they are asked to elect someone from their group to propose and someone to second the argument. They both prepare a short speech.
- A chair is elected and the class sits in a circle.
- The two Proposers speak in turn, then the Seconders speak.
- The chair then opens the debate up to the floor – all questions and comments go through the chair.
- At the end of a timed period the chair calls for a vote on the motion – either for or against.

# RESOURCES

World War One Trenches on the Web

<http://www.worldwar1.com>

BBC History on WW1

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain\\_wwone/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwone/)

Imperial War Museum:

<http://www.iwm.org.uk>

First World War.com

<http://www.firstworldwar.com>

In Flanders Field Museum

<http://www.inflandersfields.be>

Web links to many war resources on Eduwight

<http://eduwight.iow.gov.uk/curriculum/foundation/history/keystage3/25SUBJECT.asp>

School history site

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/year9links/wwi.shtml>

Military History website with article on whether Britain justified in going into First World War

<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwi/articles/britainjustified.aspx>

Anti-war website with many articles on different conflicts

<http://antiwar.com/>